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Message Text

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INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, SCUL, UR
SUBJECT: SHEVARNADZE REPORT ON NEW GEORGIAN CONSTITUTION

REF: (A) MOSCOW 8097, (B) MOSCOW 7819, (C) MOSCOW 6871

SUMMARY: GEORGIAN FIRST SECRETARY SHEVARNADZE CONFIRMS RUMORED CHANGE IN LANGUAGE CLAUSE OF NEW GEORGIAN CONSTITUTION, RETAINING GEORGIAN AS THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF THE REPUBLIC, AND CASTIGATES EARLIER "IMMORAL" PHASE IN LIFE OF GEORGIAN REPUBLIC. END SUMMARY.

1. "ZARYA VOSTOKA," THE GEORGIAN REPUBLIC'S CHIEF RUSSIAN-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER, REPORTED ON APRIL 15 THAT A PLENARY SESSION OF THE GEORGIAN PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE HEARD AND APPROVED A REPORT BY FIRST SECRETARY SHEVARNADZE ON THE PLAN FOR THE NEW GEORGIAN CONSTITUTION, AND PUBLISHED THE TEXT OF SHEVARNADZE'S SPEECH. A FULL COLUMN TOWARDS THE END OF THE SPEECH DEALS WITH THE LANGUAGE ISSUE. SHEVARNADZE MAKES THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

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-- "AFTER MUCH CONSIDERATION, AND AFTER RECEIVING MANY PROPOSALS DESERVING OF ATTENTION, AND AFTER STUDYING PUBLIC OPINION AMONG WORKERS, COLLECTIVE FARM PEASANTRY, THE INTELLIGENTSIA, STUDENTS, YOUNG PEOPLE, ETC.; AND AFTER TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION THE PRINCIPLE OF CONTINUITY AND GUIDED BY THE DEMOCRATIC NATURE OF OUR SOCIETY AND CONSTITUTION, AND THE GENERAL NATIONAL DIS-

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CUSSION WHICH TOOK PLACE WHILE THE NEW CONSTITUTION WAS BEING PREPARED, THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND THE CONSTITUTIONAL COMMISSION HAVE COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT IT IS EXPEDIENT TO KEEP IN FORCE THE WELL-KNOWN FORMULATION OF THE PRESENT CONSTITUTION, WHICH PROCLAIMS THE GEORGIAN LANGUAGE TO BE THE STATE LANGUAGE.

-- "THE GEORGIAN LANGUAGE WAS PROCLAIMED THE STATE LANGUAGE AS FAR BACK AS 1922, WHEN THE FIRST GEORGIAN CONSTITUTION WAS PROCLAIMED.

-- "IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE NATIONALITY POLICY ENUNCIATED BY LENIN, THE STATE MUST DISPLAY A SOLICITOUS ATTITUDE TOWARD THE ABHAZIAN LANGUAGE, THE OSSETIAN LANGUAGE, AND TOWARD THOSE LANGUAGES WHICH ARE USED BY OTHER NATIONALITIES RESIDING IN THE GEORGIAN REPUBLIC, SUCH AS THE ARMENIANS, AZERBAIDZHANIS, ET. AL.

-- "WE MUST SAY ANEW TO OUR PEOPLE, AND TO OUR YOUNG PEOPLE, THAT IF WE WANT TO BELONG TO THE WORLD, TO MASTER THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF SCIENCE AND TO MAINTAIN TIES WITH CONTEMPORARY WORLD CIVILIZATION, WE MUST ALSO HONOR AND STUDY THE REMARKABLE AND RICH LANGUAGE OF THE GREAT RUSSIAN PEOPLE.

-- "PROCEEDING FROM THE ABOVE, THE CONSTITUTIONAL
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CDMMISSION CONSIDERS THAT ARTICLE 75 SHOULD BE WORDED IN THE FOLLOWING MANNER: THE GEORGIAN LANGUAGE IS PROCLAIMED TO BE THE STATE LANGUAGE OF THE GEORGIAN SSR; FURTHER, THE GEORGIAN SSR IS CONCERNED WITH THE ALL-AROUND DEVELOPMENT OF THE GEORGIAN LANGUAGE AND ENSURES ITS USE IN STATE AND PUBLIC ORGANS, CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS, EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, ETC.; FINALLY, THAT THE GEORGIAN SSR ENSURES THE FREE USE OF THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE AND OF OTHER LNAGUAGES WHICH ARE USED BY THE POPULATION.

-- "IT IS NOT WITHOUT INTEREST THAT THE FACT THAT THE CONSTITUTIONAL COMMISSION WAS CORRECT IN EVALUATING THE RESULTS OF THE NATIONAL DISCUSSION OF THE DRAFT REPUBLIC CONSTITUTION WAS CONFIRMED BY INTERESTING SPECIAL STUDIES DONE BY THE COUNCIL ON PUBLIC OPINION UNDER THE GEORGIAN CP CENTRAL COMMITTEE, CARRIED OUT IN THE COURSE OF THE DISCUSSION. FOR THE FIRST TIME, CONCRETE SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH WAS CARRIED OUT IN THE REPUBLIC IN CONNECTION WITH THE DISCUSSION OF THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION. THIS RESEARCH DEMONSTRATED THE GREAT IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING PUBLIC OPINION BY SCIENTIFICALLY BASED

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METHODS IN PROPAGANDIZING THE PROVISIONS OF THE CONSTITUTION AMONG THE MASSES OF THE WORKING CLASS, THE COLLECTIVE FARM PEASANTRY, INTELLIGENTSIA, AND YOUNG PEOPLE."

2. SHEVARNADZE'S REPORT STARTS OFF WITH REPEATED PAEANS OF PRAISE TO BREZHNEV, WHO IS REFERRED TO AS THE OUTSTANDING STATE AND POLITICAL FIGURE OF THE DAY, AN INFLEXIBLE MARXIST-LENINIST, WISE, FAR-SEEING AND SAGACIOUS.

3. SHEVARNADZE CITES THE SPECIAL ROLE ASSIGNED IN THE NEW CONSTITUTION TO THE ROLE OF PUBLIC OPINION IN COMBATTING VIOLATIONS OF THE NORMS OF SOCIALIST
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SOCIETY, AND CONTINUES: "THE IGNORING OF PUBLIC OPINION

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AND AN UNDERESTIMATION BY PARTY COMMITTEES AND OTHER PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS OF THE NEED TO SHAPE IT CONDITIONED TO A LARGE EXTENT THE SUBSTANTIAL MISTAKES AND SHORTCOMINGS WHICH NOT TOO LONG AGO LAID A HEAVY BURDEN ON ALL SECTIONS OF THE NATIONAL ECONOMY, THE CULTURAL AND

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PUBLIC LIFE OF THE REPUBLIC AND WHICH STILL VERY MUCH COMPLICATE OUR WORK. THE FACT THAT TENDENCIES TOWARD PRIVATE PROPERTY, BRIBERY, EXTORTION AND OTHER SUCH MANIFESTATIONS WERE LEFT UNPUNISHED REDUCED ALL IDEOLOGICAL WORK TO NAUGHT: MORALS WERE CORRUPTED, THE CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING A COMMUNIST, A REAL PERSON, CHANGED IN THE EYES OF A CERTAIN PART OF THE POPULATION. CONSUMERIST STRIVINGS, MONEY-GRUBBING, BUREAUCRATISM, PROTECTIONISM, ELEMENTS OF BOURGEOIS MORALITY SUCH AS NEPOTISM, LOCALISM AND EGOISM, BECAME WIDESPREAD. ALL THIS CAUSED SERIOUS HARM TO THE MORAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CLIMATE IN THE REPUBLIC." HE GOES ON TO THANK THE PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE, AND PERSONALLY L. I. BREZHNEV, FOR HELPING TO PUT AN END TO THIS PERIOD OF "SUBJECTIVISM AND LIBERTARIANISM."

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4. WE GATHER THAT LIFE HAS RETURNED TO NORMAL IN TBILISI FOLLOWING THE REPORTED DEMONSTRATION OF APRIL 14. HOWEVER, THE FRENCH EMBASSY INFORMS US THAT A TRIP TO TBILISI BY ONE OF ITS OFFICERS, SCHEDULED TO COMMENCE APRIL 20, HAS BEEN CANCELLED BY MFA PROTOCOL "FOR REASONS OF A TEMPORARY NATURE."

5. COMMENT: THIS FAIRLY REMARKABLE BACK-PEDALLING ON THE STATUS OF THE GEORGIAN LANGUAGE ILLUSTRATES BOTH THE DELICACY OF THE LANGUAGE ISSUE IN SOVIET NATIONALITY QUESTIONS AND THE FACT THAT THE SOVIET LEADER-SHIP IS SENSITIVE ENDUGH TO THEM NOT TO TRY TO FORCE AN UNPOPULAR LANGUAGE POLICY AGAINST THE CLEARLY EXPRESSED WISHES OF THE POPULATION -- AT LEAST IN GEORGIA. END COMMENT. TOON

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